

**Washington, DC** – Today, Congressman Gonzalez voted to protect Americans by expanding the definition of hate crimes and providing law enforcement officers with the tools they need to prosecute these terrible crimes through the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which he Co-Sponsored. Congressman Gonzalez issued the following statement:

“Our country was founded on liberty and justice for all, and today we reaffirmed our commitment to our founding values by passing the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Years of struggling for civil rights and equality have led us to pass the current bipartisan hate crimes legislation.

“The passage of this historic bill helps us close the gap on laws governing hate crimes and extends federal jurisdiction to hate crimes motivated by the victim’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability. State and local law enforcement will now have the tools and resources they need to prevent and prosecute these hate crimes.

“This long overdue bill sends a clear signal that our society will not tolerate crimes of this nature and will continue to protect the victims of discrimination. Contrary to the beliefs of some groups, this bill does not impinge on freedom of speech or religious expression in any way. Instead, the passage of today’s bill provides the tools to fully prosecute attacks on innocent victims of hatred and deter them in the future.”

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